

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared this draft resource management plan (RMP) and environmental impact statement (EIS) to provide direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the Coeur d'Alene District, Coeur d'Alene Field Office (CdA FO) and to analyze the environmental effects resulting from implementing the alternatives addressed in this draft RMP.

The CdA planning area (planning area) is located entirely in the Panhandle Region of northern Idaho (Figure 1-1 and Map #1 in Volume III), and includes all land within this region regardless of ownership, totaling approximately 5,077,776 acres. About 96,770 acres, or 1.9 percent of the planning area, are administered by the BLM. BLM-administered lands within the CdA FO consist of numerous tracts ranging in size from less than one acre to over 10,000 acres. BLM-administered lands are mixed among private, State of Idaho, US Forest Service-administered, and Coeur d'Alene Tribal lands, each of which may be influenced or directly affected by BLM decisions. The decisions in the CdA RMP will only apply to the BLM-administered public lands within the planning area, which are referred to as the decision area. **Table ES-1** identifies the land status of the planning area by ownership.

| Table ES-1. BLM-Administered Public Lands Within the Planning Area | | | |
|---|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| County | BLM Acres | Total Acres | BLM Percent of Total |
| Benewah | 13,655 | 502,837 | 2.7 |
| Bonner | 12,139 | 1,227,920 | 1.0 |
| Boundary | 4,566 | 818,187 | 0.6 |
| Kootenai | 10,933 | 837,932 | 1.3 |
| Shoshone | 55,477 | 1,690,900 | 3.3 |
| Planning Area Total | 96,770 | 5,077,776 | 1.9 |

The RMP is being prepared using the BLM's planning regulations and guidance issued under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. BLM incorporates an EIS into its land use planning process to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500-1508), and requirements of the BLM's NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1.

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

The RMP is being prepared to provide the CDA FO with a comprehensive framework for managing lands in the planning area under jurisdiction of the BLM. The purpose of the RMP is to provide a public document that specifies overarching management policies and action on these lands. Implementation level planning and site-specific projects will be completed in conformance with the broad provisions of the RMP. A new RMP is needed to respond to changes in resource conditions, public demands, and regulations and policies, since the Management Framework Plan (1981) and its amendments were completed.

PLANNING PROCESS

The land use planning process is issue driven. Planning issues are disputes or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production, and related management practices.

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Scoping is a collaborative public involvement process to identify planning issues to be addressed. BLM conducted scoping for the CdA RMP from September 3 to November 15, 2004. A scoping report is available from the CdA FO upon request, or on the Internet at www.blm.gov/rmp/id/cda. From analyses of the existing situation and comments received during public scoping, the BLM identified six major planning issues:

Issue 1: *What opportunities will BLM provide for motorized and nonmotorized recreation, while protecting natural and cultural resources?*

Issue 2: *How will the BLM manage vegetation treatments and provide forest products, while providing fish and wildlife habitat and protecting water quality, native plant communities, old growth forest, and cultural resources?*

Issue 3: *How will BLM adjust land ownership to provide public benefits and improve access?*

Issue 4: *How will the BLM manage invasive plant species?*

Issue 5: *How will the BLM reduce the risk of harm or damage from wildland fire to the public and their property?*

Issue 6: *What strategies and priorities will BLM use to protect healthy watersheds or restore damaged watersheds and riparian areas?*

These issues drive the formulation of the plan alternatives, and addressing them has resulted in a range of management options presented in four alternatives.

MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

The basic goal of developing alternatives was to prepare different combinations of resource uses to address issues and to resolve conflicts among uses. Alternatives must meet the project purpose and need, must be reasonable, must provide a mix of resource protection, management use, and development, must be responsive to the issues (each issue must be addressed in at least one alternative), must meet the established planning criteria (Chapter 1), and must meet federal laws, regulations, and BLM planning policy. Four alternatives were developed and carried forward for detailed analysis in the draft RMP/EIS. Currently there are three wilderness study areas (WSAs) within the planning area. The RMP will not change this status, and, in accordance with current BLM land use planning policy, no new WSAs will be designated. All alternatives also call for the continued management of invasive species and noxious weeds through coordinated efforts in cooperative weed management areas.

Alternative A (No Action – Continue Current Management)

Alternative A is the continuation of current management. Referred to as the No Action Alternative, this alternative would continue present management practices based on the existing land use plan and plan amendments. Valid decisions contained in the 1981 Emerald Empire MFP would be implemented if not already completed. Direction contained in existing laws, regulations, policies, and standards would also continue to be implemented, sometimes superseding provisions of the 1981 MFP. The current levels, methods, and mix of multiple use management of public lands in the CdA FO area would continue, and resource values would generally receive attention at present levels.

Key components to Alternative A are as follows:

- Continued management of motorized recreation, with 65 percent of BLM lands remaining open to off-road travel and 162 acres closed to motorized vehicles.
- Emphasis on management of forest resources for commodity production, with a probable sale quantity of 3.7 MMBF per year. Protection of other resources is somewhat provided for in the MFP, but more so through current laws, regulations, and BLM policies.
- Management of special status species and their vegetation habitats to provide for their continued presence in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Continued management of existing special management areas. These include two areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC)/research natural areas (RNA) (2,901 acres) and five stream segments found eligible for the National Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR) System. Allowable uses would be very limited within these areas.
- Management of land ownership adjustments emphasizes retention and acquisition of lands with high economic resource values, lands that increase public access, and lands that would consolidate federal holdings.
- Management of wildland fire to protect people, property, and commodity resources. Fire use is not an option.
- Protection of fish and riparian habitat and watersheds through the provisions of the Inland Native Fish Strategy (INFISH).

Alternative B (Commodity - Utility Emphasis)

Alternative B emphasizes active management for commodities, amenities, and services. Protection of other resources would be secondary to restoring healthy commercial forests. This alternative also emphasizes opportunities for developed and motorized recreation, hunting, and fishing.

Key components of Alternative B are as follows:

- Management of motorized recreation through retention of current closed areas and limiting travel within all remaining areas (99.8 percent of BLM lands) to designated roads and trails. Emphasis on maximizing miles of designated roads and trails.
- Emphasis on management of forest resources for commodity production, with a probable sale quantity of 5.1 MMBF per year. This alternative incorporates measures, in addition to those under Alternative A, to protect other resources and uses.
- Incorporation of conservation measures from threatened and endangered species recovery plans.
- Management would maintain existing ACEC/RNAs, but all eligible stream segments would be found unsuitable for inclusion in the National WSR System.
- Management of land ownership adjustments, similar to Alternative A, emphasizes retention and acquisition of lands with high economic resource values, and lands that increase public access, provide recreation opportunities, or consolidate federal holdings.
- Management of wildland fire to protect people, property, and commodity resources. Fire use for resource benefit may be considered within all areas outside of the WUI.
- Protection of fish and riparian habitat and watersheds through the provisions of the Coeur d'Alene Native Fish Strategy (CNFISH), a BLM strategy specific to the planning area derived from INFISH.

Alternative C (Minimal Active Management - Preservation Emphasis)

Alternative C includes management strategies to preserve and protect non-commodity resources (e.g., wildlife habitat, water quality, etc.) and de-emphasizes resource production goals for commodities. There would be much less active management of resources than under the other alternatives. Production of products from vegetation management in all habitats would be secondary to restoring healthy forest vegetation and riparian areas. This alternative emphasizes dispersed and nonmotorized recreation.

Key components to Alternative C are as follows:

- Management of motorized recreation through closure of an additional 149 acres and limiting travel within all remaining areas (99.7 percent of BLM lands) to designated roads and trails. Emphasis on minimizing miles of designated roads and trails to protect resources.
- Management of forest vegetation allows for an intermediate level of commodity production with a probable sale quantity of 880 MBF per year, while providing protection to other resources.
- Incorporation of conservation measures from threatened and endangered species recovery plans.
- Management creates 19 new ACECs (23,273 additional acres). All eligible stream segments would be found suitable for inclusion in the National WSR System.
- Management of land ownership adjustments emphasizes retention and acquisition of lands with non-commodity resource values, and lands that increase public access, provide dispersed recreation opportunities, or consolidate federal holdings.
- Management of wildland fire to protect people, property, and non-commodity resources. Fire use for resource benefit may be considered within all areas outside of the WUI.
- Protection of fish and riparian habitat, and watersheds through the provisions of the Coeur d'Alene Native Fish Strategy (CNFISH).

Alternative D (Preferred Alternative)

BLM believes that Alternative D represents the best mix and variety of management actions to resolve the planning issues and to achieve statutory requirements and policy goals. It is intended to balance management of commodity and non-commodity resources. This alternative was developed after a preliminary analysis of the first three alternatives. This alternative incorporates many management objectives and actions from the first three alternatives, and includes new management direction when deemed necessary. It also incorporates new information that became available after the first three alternatives were developed. As a result, some management direction under Alternative D provides more resource protection than Alternative C. This alternative also generally allows for more uses and active resource management than Alternative C, but less than Alternatives A or B.

Key components to Alternative D are as follows:

- Management of motorized recreation through closure of an additional 469 acres (primarily areas with identified hazardous materials) and limiting travel within all remaining areas (99.7 percent of BLM lands) to designated roads and trails. Miles of designated road are only slightly less than Alternative B, while still providing protection of other resources.
- Management of forest vegetation focuses on areas where natural disturbance (e.g., wildland fire, disease) has occurred, yielding a probable sale quantity of 4.4 MMBF per year.

- Incorporation of conservation measures from draft BLM state-wide plan amendments for federally listed species.
- Management creates three new ACECs/RNAs (357 additional acres). Four eligible stream segments would be found suitable for inclusion in the National WSR System. Suitability for the remaining eligible segment would be deferred until the Idaho Panhandles National Forests makes a determination for adjacent segments.
- Management of land ownership adjustments emphasizes retention and acquisition of lands with both commodity and non-commodity resource values, and lands that increase public access, provide recreation opportunities, or consolidate federal holdings.
- Management of wildland fire to protect people, property, and both commodity and non-commodity resources. Fire use for resource benefit may be considered within all areas outside of the WUI.
- Protection of fish and riparian habitat, and watersheds through the provisions of the Coeur d'Alene Native Fish Strategy (CNFISH).

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Alternative A would result in maintaining the current effect on local economies and businesses that depend on uses of BLM-administered public lands for tourism, recreation, and resource extraction. However, this alternative also has the greatest potential of any alternative to result in impacts to the physical and biological environment. Taking no action would prohibit the BLM from implementing management measures needed to both protect resources and address concerns related to growing recreational uses. Alternative B offers the greatest economic potential benefit. This alternative would also result in impacts to the physical and biological environment, but less so than Alternative A. Alternative C would have the least potential impact on physical and biological resources, but the greatest potential for adverse impacts on the local economies. Alternative D would allow for most uses to continue or increase, but would constrain certain activities in order to reduce potential impacts. Potential and magnitude of impacts under Alternative D would be between those from Alternatives B and C.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The BLM has coordinated and will continue to collaborate with the following Tribal Governments, state and federal agencies, and local governments during development of the RMP:

- Coeur d'Alene Tribe
- Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
- Kalispel Tribe of Indians
- Salish and Kootenai Confederated Tribes
- Idaho State Governor's Office
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Idaho Department of Lands
- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
- Idaho Department of Commerce - Tourism Division
- Idaho Association of Highway Districts
- Benewah County Board of Commissioners

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- Bonner County Board of Commissioners
- Boundary County Board of Commissioners
- Kootenai County Board of Commissioners
- Shoshone County Board of Commissioners
- USDA Forest Service, Idaho Panhandles National Forest
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Environmental Protection Agency